

BY-LAWS OF THE MIAMI-DADE SISTER CITIES PROGRAM

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this program shall be known as Consular Corps and Miami-Dade Sister Cities Program.

The program is a division of Miami-Dade County Government within the Jay Malina International Trade Consortium (ITC).

ARTICLE II - PURPOSE

To promote relations between Miami-Dade County and its sister cities through cultural and educational exchanges, to promote tourism, international trade and commerce, as well as to serve as liaison to the Consular Corps.

ARTICLE III - POLICIES

The program shall be non-sectarian, non-partisan, non-political, and non-profit.

The program shall not interfere in the domestic or foreign policies of the U.S.A. and other nations.

The goals of the program shall be compatible with the international agenda of the ITC.

The program is responsible for raising, through donations or in-kind services, the necessary funds to carry-out the projects the Council has decided to undertake.

The program may not contradict the adopted policies of Miami-Dade County, and shall abide by all appropriate and pertinent procedures of the County, unless otherwise authorized by the Mayor and Board of County Commissioners (BCC) by ordinance.

The program activities shall comply with the Sunshine Law.

The Council shall from time to time recommend to the BCC the establishment of new Sister Cities affiliations with Miami-Dade County. According to the rules and regulations of Sister Cities International and BCC Resolution No. R-416-95, the governing bodies of the foreign cities and of Miami-Dade County must by resolution approve the affiliation, and the respective mayors must sign the instrument of affiliation to be recognized by Sister Cities International.

ARTICLE IV - COORDINATING COUNCIL

Section I - Authority

The activities of the program shall be exercised, conducted, and guided by a Coordinating Council which shall serve as the advisory body to the Mayor and the BCC.

By 2/3 vote, the Council may remove any member of the program or reject any activity sponsored by a committee that is considered contrary to the stated goals and purpose or historical spirit of the program.

The Chair may create/abolish any committee that he/she deems necessary and appropriate in order to carry-out the stated goals of the program.

Section 2 –Purposes and Policies

The Council shall set the annual agenda; establish priorities and work programs; recommend to the Mayor and the BCC the overall direction of the program; and represent the Miami-Dade Sister Cities Program locally, nationally, and internationally.

Section 3 - Membership

The Mayor, the Board of County Commissioners, and the Coordinating Council shall appoint to the Council individuals who have demonstrated a willingness to make positive contributions, and have expressed the desire to fully participate in the goals and objectives of the Miami-Dade County Sister Cities Program.

The Council shall consist initially of not more than 35 members. The Mayor shall appoint members representing each established Sister City relationship with Miami-Dade County. The Board of County Commissioners shall appoint 5 at-large members and the Council shall also appoint 5 at-large members. As the Board of County Commissioners approves new Sister Cities relationships the membership of the Council shall grow, and the Mayor shall make new appointments accordingly.

Section 4 – Terms of Office

Members shall serve a two year staggered term of office beginning on December 4, 2002. At the first meeting of the new Council lots will be drawn from the membership to determine one and two year terms. Thereafter all members shall be appointed for a two-year term.

Members of the Council can be appointed for no more than four terms or a total of eight years.

The Mayor shall initially reappoint all current active members of the Council.

Section 5 – Officers

The Mayor shall appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Council from among the Council membership for a two-year term of office beginning with the adoption of these by-laws. The Chair and the Vice Chair can be appointed for a period not to exceed three consecutive terms or a total of six years. The Chair of the Council shall also serve as a member of the Board of Directors of ITC.

Section 6 - Voting Members

The voting members of the council shall consist of the Chairperson and the members of Council.

Section 7 – Vacancies

Vacancies shall be filled for the remainder of the term by the Mayor, BCC, or the Council as appropriate.

Section 8 – Honorary Chairperson and Members

The Mayor of Miami-Dade County shall serve as Honorary Chairperson of the program.

The Mayor shall select a Miami-Dade County Commissioner as the Honorary Chairperson of individual sister cities.

Any person who has rendered conspicuous service for the improvement of international relations through activities related to sister cities may, by majority vote of the Coordinating Council, be granted an honorary membership in the program.

Honorary Chairpersons and honorary members shall not have a vote in any meeting or decision of the program.

The Consul General and/or Consul of the sister cities nation shall be entitled to serve as an honorary member of the Council and participate or appoint a representative from his/her office.

Section 9 – Compensation

The members shall not receive any compensation for their services, but, by resolution of the Council, shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual, appropriate, and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

Section 10 – Regular Meetings

The Council shall meet at least once every quarter or at the call of the Chairperson or at the call of the Mayor.

Section 11 – Special Meetings

Special meetings may be called at any time by the written request of 1/3 of the voting Council members with ten (10) day notice sent via mail, therein stating time, place, and principal items of business to be transacted.

Section 12 – Quorum

A quorum of the Coordinating Council shall consist of no less than 7 voting members present.

Section 13 – Voting

Any action of the Council must be by a majority vote of eligible members present.

Section 14 – Attendance

It is the responsibility of the members to regularly attend Coordinating Council meetings.

Any Council member who is absent and unexcused from three (3) consecutive regular meetings will be removed as a member of the Coordinating Council.

Section 15 - Powers/Duties of the Chairperson

In addition to those stated within these bylaws, the Chairperson of the Coordinating Council shall exercise the following powers and be responsible for

- setting the date of regular council meetings
- submitting for the approval of the Council the annual objectives of the program
- setting the agenda for council meetings
- presiding over council meetings

- appointing and removing committees and their chairs from within the Council or without
- serving, along with the Director, as the primary spokesperson to SCI and on behalf of the program.
- representing the program at the SCI annual conference.

The Vice Chairperson shall act as the Chairperson in the absence of the Chairperson.

ARTICLE V – OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR AND STAFF

The Executive Director of the ITC shall provide staff support to the Council and shall act as the Director of the Sister Cities Program. The powers, responsibilities, and budget authority of the Director shall be determined by Miami-Dade County. The Director shall serve as the Council's and Program's liaison to the Mayor, the BCC, and the County Manager.

ARTICLE VI – FINANCE

There is established a Coordinating Council Trust Fund Account in the Miami-Dade County Finance Department. Private sector funds or grants received by the Council shall continue to be deposited in this account; and shall be disbursed with the approval of the majority members of the Council present.

Existing individual sister cities fund accounts deposited with the Miami-Dade County Finance Department shall continue to be kept individually until such a time as those are depleted at which time the account will be closed. Thereafter all funds raised shall be deposited in the Coordinating Council Trust Account.

ARTICLE VII – PARLIAMENTARY PROCESS

The rules contained in the most current edition of Robert's Rules of Order shall govern the council in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not inconsistent with these bylaws.

ARTICLE VIII – AMENDMENTS

These bylaws may be amended at any time by the Coordinating Council by a 2/3 vote of the Council, provided the proposed amendment shall have first been prepared in writing and distributed via mail/fax to the Coordinating Council ten (10) days prior to the meeting in which the council shall consider the amendment.

The following persons shall have the right to submit amendments for consideration: any voting member of the Council, the Chairperson of the BCC, and the Mayor of Miami-Dade County. If approved in accordance with these bylaws, the amendment(s) shall go into effect immediately.

Revised and approved by the Coordinating Council on January 15, 2004.



J.A. Ojeda, Jr.
Executive Director
International Trade Consortium